

Expected Practices

Specialty: Ophthalmology

Subject: Refraction Services – Simple Refractive Error

Date: November 1, 2012

Purpose:

To better define the County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services (DHS) practices regarding ophthalmology services for adult patients needing only correction of simple refractive error (i.e., glasses or elective soft contact lenses), we are providing the following expected practice.

Expected Practice:

As DHS does not provide glasses or elective soft contact lenses, referrals for adult patients needing only refraction services for simple refractive error will not be accepted. However, patients followed by optometry/ophthalmology for other ocular conditions can be offered refraction as part of their DHS comprehensive eye health program.

For any adult patients in need of refraction/glasses/elective soft contact lenses for simple refractive error, please adhere to the following:

1. Refraction appointments for adult patients with only refractive error and no other ocular conditions are not available services in DHS eye clinics.
2. Adult patients needing refraction only services should obtain these from providers outside the DHS system of care, as per current practice for glasses and elective soft contact lenses.

This Expected Practice was developed by a DHS Specialty-Primary Care Work Group to fulfill the DHS mission to ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, and cost-effective health care. SPC Work Groups, composed of specialist and primary care provider representatives from across LA County DHS, are guided by 1) real-life practice conditions at our facilities, 2) available clinical evidence, and 3) the principle that we must provide equitable care for the entire population that LA County DHS is responsible for, not just those that appear in front of us. It is recognized that in individual situations a provider's clinical judgment may vary from this Expected Practice, but in such cases compelling documentation for the exception should be provided.